UNDER THE LENS

Proper Appreciation of the Photograph.

Do Not Obliterate the Life Spot. Photography Develops Love of Nature.

Webster's definition of the word portrait is, a graphic delineation of an individual, hence an exact likeness of a living being. But that word portrait is much abused. All people understand physiognomy more or less, but very few know it. We all criticise portraits and decide in our minds that a person looks intelligent or not. We often hear people say, when examining a photograph, "That's a clever looking man;" "What a bright face that person has;" and a dozen other similar expressions. Such remarks as these prove that we understand physiognomy, yet clever people with handsome faces will go to a photographer and have their portraits made without a particle of amination or expression.

Many people seem to think, the less the expression, the better the picture. They do not realize the fact that by taking out the modeling of the face they are handing down to posterity a picture that will be criticised and that it will be decided whether or not they

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are intelligent. That is why a negative should be softened and have all the delineation possible in it, unless the face is a wicked one, in which case by all means obliterate it. If the face is a good one and the photographer makes the subject look like a vacant imbecile in alabaster, he should be prosecuted for defamation of character.

Nothing is more beautiful than to see the lines that are caused by goodness. Study the face of a gambler or woman of the world. There you see a hard solid face with tight lips and cold eye, especially the gambler, whose main study is to hide his expression. The smile of this type is mechanical, like the stereotyped smile of a city waiter. The cold caculating person smiles with his mouth. The good conscience smile is in the eyes. There is more to be read in the eyes than in all the other parts of the face put together. The life spot in the eye should never be tampered with, for that is the life of the face, continually changing, like the rays from a diamond. It shows the thoughts of the owner. Obliterate the little reflection of the eye, then the face becomes dead. How wanting in character are most of the photographic portraits, owing to the manipulation of the photographer (who by the way is sometimes called an artist). If he makes a picture of an ugly person or a commonplace scene, he is a photographer, if with decent lenses and a tolerable instrument a charming person, and a picturesque scene, he blossoms into an artist.

The portrait as a likeness has not improved. The daguerreotype made half a century ago is equal to any portrait taken now, and far superior to many. There is more modeling and character in them than in the pictures of today. The reason is that the daguerreotype was not ruined by the so-called art of "retouching," a branch in photography that obliterates nature's finest work. Retouching is indispensable but should be manipulated by an artist.

Photography has revolutionized almost very profession and trade. In considering what it has accomplished since its discovery, it is one of the greatest and most important discoveries of the present century. It has kept pace with steam and electricity, has taught us wonderful things, and has also shown us that nature is marvelous in her changes of light and forms. Before its discovery the artist who sat for hours and days watching the changes of tints and graduations of light and shadow, was the only authority upon composition. At present, almost any one who takes up the study may soon learn to tell how a picture should be balanced by rocks, trees of shadow; that the foreground should be of proper strength and shadow and form to make a picture pleasing to the eye. The kodak has been an excellent teacher. After a person has taken a few pictures be begins to see details and form that probably he would not have noticed before. He makes comparisons with other students, and so gradually comes to admire nature as she should be admired. Daguerre, who invented photography in 1839, gave an exposure from seven to eight hours. Now we get pictures in less than one-hundredth part of a second, which shows that the eye is very slow in comparison with other things. The quick shutter and sensitve plate have shown that the horse in motion moves differently from what we were in the habit at seeing.

When the process became generally known, changes took place very rapidly. The fine art world felt it most. At that time most pictures were reproduced by engraving or lithography. These were brought to a standstill. Publishers countermanded their orders, and stopped the engraver when they found that photogravures could be made for about half the cost, and the public not know the difference. The result is that the engravers, not having much work, do not take apprentices, and the beautiful art is gradually dying out.

Nearly every branch of art is assisted by photography. The painter, if he be a landscape or portrait painter, can utilize a photograph of a piece of foliage or drapery. There is scarcely any process for illustrating periodicals, without the aid of photography. Fifty years ago a picture of any subject cost ten times more than 500 bound in good book form cost at the present time. It is astonishing the number of uses to which photography has been put, oftentimes with marvelous results. For instance, the principal protection that banks have in paying out money is the perforation of the amount the check call for. It is very easy for the forger to raise the amount that is in writing, and not leave a noticable trace to the eye; but it always leaves a light yellow stain that may be so delicate that the microscope cannot detect it, and yet photography will register the delicate color.

A check was once brought to the writer which had been raised from $38 to $3,800. The experts were not sure how the change had been made. The check was enlarged by photography and it was shown that the forger had cut out the star before the amount, had filled the hole, had perforated two ciphers and another star so nicely and cleverly that the change was not detected under the microscope. The enlarged photograph showed the patch very plainly, proving that the perforating is no longer a protection when in the hands of a skilled forger.

During the seige of Paris, the writer made photographs of newspapers which were reduced. Transparencies were made for the stereoptican. These were sent up by balloon and dropped into Paris. The Parisians put them into the lantern, enlarging them sufficiently to read. FRANK DAVEY.

LONGEST STREET-CAR RIDE FOR ONE FARE.

It is not too much to say that American street railways afford the cheapest transportation in the world, and awards to the city of Brooklyn the credit of giving the longest ride that can be had for one fare in any great city in this country.

The rate per mile for the longest legitmate ride that can be obtained for one fare in that city is given at .28 cents; Chicago comes next, with a rate of one-third of a cent; New York third, its rate being .40 cents, while Philadelphia has a rate of .43 cents.

The longest rides for one fare in these cities are stated as follows: Brooklyn, 18 miles; Chicago, 12 miles; New York, 12½ miles, and Philadelphia 11¾ miles.

Chicago has utterly distanced its rivals in the matter of total track mileage, having, according to the above authority, 760 miles of track, as against 462 in Philadelphia, 458 in New York and 393 in Brooklyn. In Glasgow, a city which is often held up as possessing a model street railway system, the longest ride that can be had for a single fare is 5.37 miles, and the rate per mile for this ride is 1.17 cents. That the number of passengers who ride long distances in Chicago is proportionately large is shown by the fact that no less than 500,000 transfers are given daily on the car lines of that city.—Street Railway Journal.

A MISTAKEN IDEA.

Soap is not the enemy to the complexion which many people consider it. It is infinitely better for the skin than the dirt which will collect in the pores after a warm and dusty day with much wheeling or traveling. Olive oil soap is always the best for the face, but it should be thoroughly rinsed off after using. The hands are better for bathing the face than a cloth or sponge, and the motion should be rotary and upward, rather than downward. Discretion can be used with soap, as with other things, for too much of it will dry the skin.

Leo XIII will, according to his personal doctor, in the ordinary course of events, see the 20th century. That he himself is convinced of this is proven in his plans to inaugurate on a large and solemn scale throughout Christendom a series of religious services as thank offerings at the close of this century and as a welcome to the opening of the next.